

Focus on People

Compiled by Heike Hasenauer

SSG Alberto Betancourt



LeClerc: Co-designer of new medal

OVER the past 20 years, **Sarah LeClerc** has designed hundreds of ribbons and medals for the Institute of Heraldry.

But none of those meant as much to her as the Defense of Freedom Medal she recently designed to honor Department of Defense employees injured or killed while on duty during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. [See November's "Briefings" for more on the medal.]

Leclerc said she and her co-designer, **Costella Alford**, were under a tremendous time crunch to create the medal.

"I spent a lot of time in the library and watching TV at home, trying to get ideas for the medal's design," Alford said. "It was a difficult task because I didn't think we could create anything that justly honors those who will receive it."

Both women say they wish that recipients of the medal could know that they have not been forgotten.

"To receive a medal is a high honor," LeClerc said. "As tied to tragedy as this one is, it will forever remind those who receive it — or their survivors — how Americans rallied together and supported one another."

"This medal acknowledges Defense Department civilian employees and other civilians who are killed or injured while they're working for the U.S. government," said Charles S. Abell, assistant secretary of defense for force management policy. "It reinforces the total force concept that makes our nation so strong." — SSG **Alberto Betancourt**

UP-and-coming country singer **Darryl Worley** and former soldier-turned-country singer **Craig Morgan** recently completed a tandem jump with members of the U.S. Army Parachute Team, The Golden Knights, at Fort Campbell, Ky.

For Worley, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. For Morgan, who had performed 114 jumps over 10 years of active duty as a fire-support specialist with such units as the 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions, it was a comfortable reminiscence of what a day at the "office" used to be like.

More than that, the jump set the stage for Morgan's enlistment into the 861st Quartermaster Company, a Nashville-based Reserve unit.

After Morgan landed, LTC J. Kirk Burton, commander of the Nashville U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion, conducted the enlistment ceremony.

"I'm happy to be joining an airborne unit based in my backyard," Morgan said, as the unit's commander, 1LT Harold Turks, presented him with a maroon beret and welcomed him aboard.

Jumping out of planes "beats the heck out of this music industry stuff," joked Morgan, who left active duty in 1996 to pursue a career in the music industry.

His debut album, released in 2000, featured three singles, including "Paradise," a song based on Morgan's experiences in Panama during Operation Just Cause.

Members of Morgan's new unit and former unit, the 101st Div. Artillery, were at the drop zone to greet the two country singers.

Morgan and Worley, the latter best known for his Top 10 single "Good Day to Run," lunched at Fort Campbell's dining facility, then autographed pictures and CDs and sang a few songs.

"I want you guys to know that I appreciate what you do," Worley told soldiers who came to witness the enlistment event.

"The music business is so minute when compared

Morgan (left) and Worley: Playing country for soldiers.



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to what you guys do," echoed Morgan. "I know how important the Army was to me when I wore the uniform. Now, I'm wearing it again, thank you very much." — *Lee Elder, Nashville U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion Public Affairs Office*

FOR paratroopers, Leap Fest is more than an eye-watering adrenaline rush into the clear bluesky. The annual international competition brings together the best military parachutists in the world.

Five very surprised members of the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Infantry Group's Long-Range Surveillance Detachment bested 47 parachute teams from around the world to take the first-place award at Leap Fest 2001, in Kingston, R.I.

The competition pitted teams from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, Germany and South Africa against each other in the Rhode Island National Guard-hosted event.

Alaska Guard soldier **SSG John Drew** said the Alaskans were definitely "the underdogs" in this competition. "We were competing against Navy SEALs, Marine Corps reconnaissance units, and other teams that spend a lot more time parachuting than we do."

The winning team also included **CPT Robert Nash, SSG Stephen Blair, SSG Troy Godwin and SGT Eryk Crawford.**

Each team consisted of four members and an alternate, and each team jumped three times from a CH-47 Chinook. Teams were judged on the amount of time they required to reach the middle of a target area after hitting the ground.

"The system of jumps and scoring might sound simple," Drew said, "but the competition was anything but simple. We used the MC1-1C parachute. It's one you can't guide as well as the new 'sport' models. On our third jump, the aircraft dropped us 500 yards upwind of the target."

The Long-Range Surveillance Detach-



Morgan (right): Enlisting after jump.

Photo by Lee Elder

ment, located at Fort Richardson, is an elite unit within the 207th Inf. Grp. It routinely deploys to nations throughout the Pacific Rim to accomplish its annual training requirements. — *Alaska National Guard PAO*

AN NCO from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit went head-to-head with hundreds of America's best rifle shooters at the 2001 National Highpower Rifle Matches in August and came out on top.

SFC Grant L. Singley won the prestigious National Service Rifle Championship for the third time in six years; he was also the 1996 and 1998 national champion, and finished second last year.

In 1996 Singley became the only shooter ever to win the President's Hundred Match, the Interservice Rifle Championship and the National Service Rifle Championship, all in the same year.

The National Matches are the most important competitions for service rifle shooters and are conducted once a year to identify the best shooters in America, Singley said.

This year's win makes him the first soldier to win the National Service Rifle Championship three times.

Shooting the USA-MU-modified M-16A2, Singley also placed second in the overall championship, shooting against more than 800 of the country's best shooters, using highly sophisticated bolt-action competitive rifles.

Singley said his goal now is to win the overall National Highpower Championship.

"I feel great about winning and even better about being able to contribute to the success of the USAMU Service Rifle Team," Singley said. "I thank the coaches and members of my team for their support and encouragement." — *Paula J. Randall-Pagán, U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit PAO*

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Singley: Top rifle shooter.



Photo by Lee Elder